

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:208

ANSWERED ON:27.02.2008

OPENING UP OF ROAD LINKS AMONG SAARC COUNTRIES

Singh Shri Chandra Bhushan

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the SAARC nations are considering to open road links among all the SAARC countries;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any discussion has been held in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a) – (d) Yes. At the 14th SAARC Summit held in New Delhi in April 2007, the Heads of State and Government "recognized the full benefits of an integrated multimodal transport system in the region. They emphasized that this would not be realized unless physical infrastructure and matters relating to customs clearance and other facilitation measures, including multimodal transport operations, were addressed comprehensively". The discussions in this regard were held during the first SAARC Transport Minister's Meeting on August 29-31, 2007. The Meeting deliberated on the Report of the SAARC Regional Multimodal Transport Study prepared and funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB). The meeting recommended several rail and sea links, and the following pilot sub-regional and regional road corridors:

Linkage from Phuntsholing to Hashimara

Kathmandu-Birgunj-Kolkata/Haldia

Agartala-Akhaura-Chittagong

India also circulated a Draft Regional Motor Vehicle Agreement for the consideration of the Member States. Member States would be examining the viability/desirability of the identified pilot projects for implementation during the Third Meeting of the Inter-Governmental Group on Transport scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka in March/April 2008.